

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07 INRE-00 NSC-05

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R 241241Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3309

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENGLAND

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2166

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET IT

SUBJECT: THE EVACUATION OF ITALIAN NATIONALS FROM ERITREA:
PROGRESS REPORT

REF: STATE 40666 NOTAL

ITALIAN COUNSELOR HAS SHARED WITH US STATUS OF HIS EMBASSY'S
EFFORTS EVACUATE ITALIAN NATIONALS FROM ERITREA TO ADDIS ABABA
AND FROM ADDIS ABABA TO ITALY. SALIENT FACTS CONVEYED TO US
FEBRUARY 24 FOLLOW;

1. ITALIAN GOVERNMENT SENT MILITARY C-130 AIRCRAFT TO
ETHIOPIA WHEN IT INITIALLY BECAME CLEAR EARLY THIS MONTH THAT
MANY ITALIAN NATIONALS IN ERITREA WOULD HAVE TO BE EVACUATED.
ITALIAN GOVERNMENT REASONED THAT MILITARY AIRCRAFT MORE SUITABLE
THAN CIVIL AIRCRAFT IN ASMARA ENVIRONMENT SHOULD RESCUE OPER-
ATION PROVE NECESSARY. ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, DECLINED
TO PERMIT MILITARY AIRCRAFT INTO ASMARA AND C-130'S WERE FLOWN
TO ADDIS INSTEAD, WHERE THEY REMAINED UNTIL FEW DAYS AGO.

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ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY MOTIVATED BY OBJECTIONS TO "MILI-

TARY" RESCUE OPERATION ON ONE HAND AND CONCERNED OVER STRONGLY ADVERSE IMPACT UPON ERITREAN ECONOMY OF WHOLESAL DEPARTURE OF ASMARA ITALIANS.

2. ITALIAN EMBASSY HERE CHOSE NOT TO INSIST ON USE MILITARY AIRCRAFT AND EVENTUALLY PERSUADED THE EPMG TO PERMIT ERITREAN ITALIANS WHO WISHED TO DO SO TO DEPART FOR ADDIS VIA EAL. ROUGHLY 2100 ITALIAN NATIONALS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS PERMISSION AND HAVE LEFT ERITREA TO DATE.

3. ONCE IN ADDIS, HOWEVER, EPMG CONCERNS OVER ECONOMIC LOSS INHERENT IN THESE DEPARTURES ONCE AGAIN ASCENDANT AND IT TOOK FURTHER EFFORTS OVER SEVERAL DAYS TO OBTAIN ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE DEPARTURE OF EVACUEES FROM THE COUNTRY. WHILE EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE ITALIAN EMBASSY AND EPMG IN COURSE, LATTER STALLED ON EXIT VISAS.

4. EPMG FINALLY AGREED TO ALLOW ITALIANS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. EIGHT HUNDRED PLUS HAD DONE SO AT THIS WRITING AND ITALIAN EMBASSY EXPECTS NUMBER TO CROSS THRESHOLD OF FIRST 1000 WITHIN NEXT DAY OR TWO.

5. ITALIAN EMBASSY OF VIEW THAT EPMG'S DECISION IS FUNCTION OF OVERALL POLICY DETERMINATION BY "DIRG" TO PROCEED MILITARILY TO REDUCE THE ERITREAN INSURGENCIES AND TO SUBORDINATE TO THAT OBJECTIVE BOTH THE CONDITION OF CIVILIANS (NOT JUST FOREIGNERS) IN ERITREA AND THE IMPACT OF SUCH MILITARY OPERATIONS AS MAY PROVE NECESSARY UPON THE ERITREAN ECONOMY (CF REFTTEL).

WYMAN

NOTE BY OCT: DISTRIBUTION PER MR. HOGANSON, S/S-O.

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